

## **PRESS RELEASE**

For immediate release

Ottawa, December 10, 2021

### **ParlAmericas held its 18th Plenary Assembly titled "Rebuilding the Social Contract"**

With the support of the Chilean Senate as host parliament, ParlAmericas held its 18th Plenary Assembly on November 26 and 29 and December 10 with a series of virtual activities focused on exploring the rebuilding of the social contract.

The Plenary Assembly brought together parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, and representatives of youth and civil society organizations from the Americas and the Caribbean to discuss the need to rebuild the social contract in the context of post-pandemic recovery efforts and in response to civil society's demands to reinvent and transform governance and development models based on inclusive, sustainable and democratic principles that leave no one behind.

The event, which coincided with the 20th anniversary of the creation of ParlAmericas and the adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS), began with an inter-parliamentary dialogue session held on November 26. The session included a keynote address by the Secretary General of the OAS, Mr. Luis Almagro, and speeches by Senator Rosa Gálvez (Canada), President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change, and Member of Parliament Manzoor Nadir (Guyana), Speaker of the National Assembly and member of the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas.

A high-level dialogue was also held, which included a discussion, prospective analysis, and exchange of good legislative practices regarding the role of parliaments in rebuilding the social contract. The panel, which was moderated by Senator Verónica Camino (Mexico), President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality (PNGE), included the participation of Senator Reginald Farley (Barbados), president of the Senate; Member of the Legislative Assembly Paola Vega (Costa Rica), Vice-President for Central America of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change; and the Honourable Representative Juan Carlos Losada (Colombia).

In addition, on November 29, the parliamentary dialogue session was held with representatives of civil society and youth organizations from the Americas and the Caribbean. The session was inaugurated by Member of the Chamber of Deputies Javier Macaya (Chile), President of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network, and Senator Alincia Williams Grant (Antigua and Barbuda), president of the Senate and member of the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas. A dialogue was held during the session, which was moderated by Member of Parliament Marc Serré (Canada), member of the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas, with the participation of

Paulina Valenzuela, member of the Chilean Constitutional Convention, and former youth Member of the National Assembly of Panama Jorge Marín, representative of the Youth Legislative Impact project in Panama. During the discussion, the panellists and participants offered their perspectives on the role of civil society and youth organizations in the process of rebuilding the social contract, the priorities on their political agendas, and the importance of promoting youth political participation.

Finally, the plenary session was held on December 10, with opening remarks from Senator Blanca Ovelar (Paraguay), President of ParlAmericas, the Honourable Bridgid Annisette-George (Trinidad and Tobago), Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Senator Marcela Sabat (Chile), representative of the host parliament of the 18th Plenary Assembly to the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas. As is customary, the accountability reports from the authorities of the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas were presented. This year, the annual report from the President of ParlAmericas along with those of the three network Presidents were presented in video format, with subtitles in all of ParlAmericas' official languages. Subsequently, a round of parliamentary interventions was held, featuring moderation by Member of the Legislative Assembly María Inés Solís (Costa Rica), member of the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas. During this period, one legislator designated by each member parliament presented some of the legislative initiatives that are being carried out in different areas to rebuild the social contract with the collaboration of civil society and young people.

Afterwards, Member of the Legislative Assembly María Inés Solís (Costa Rica) read the [declaration](#) of the 18th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly. Prior to closing the meeting, Director General of ParlAmericas Alisha Todd announced the results of the elections, in which the candidates were elected by acclamation.

In reference to the relevance of the theme of the plenary session, Senator Blanca Ovelar (Paraguay), President of ParlAmericas, stated that “it is necessary to establish a new social contract that better meets the needs and demands of citizens to strengthen the democratic model, reinforce mechanisms for participating in public affairs, bolster social protection systems, transform production and consumption models under sustainable paradigms, and address the effects of climate change.”

Senator Marcela Sabat (Chile), representative of the host parliament of the 18th Plenary Assembly to the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas, pointed out that “the depth of our citizens' demands requires effective and efficient action by the branches of government, to be attuned to them and channel the energy they generate through institutional and legal channels. This is where institutions that represent the people must—by definition—play a leading role.”

For more information on the work carried out by ParlAmericas, visit [www.parlamericas.org](http://www.parlamericas.org) and follow @ParlAmericas on social media.